

66-7012

7 SEP 1960

Dr. George B. Kistiakowsky
Special Assistant to the President
for Science and Technology
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear George:

I was pleased to receive a copy of the thoughtful and perceptive letter Admiral Berkner sent you on 15 July. Members of my staff have discussed his observations at some length, and I want to convey to you our general analysis of them at this time.

We fully share Admiral Berkner's concern over the present intentions of the Soviet leaders and in our own thinking on the subject always take into account the possibility that they may be making radical military preparations. A government as obsessed with secrecy as that of the USSR naturally generates suspicion that it has something to hide. In our experience, however, there has never been any significant let-down in Soviet security precautions, and any increase in the degree of stress the Soviets place on security publicly seems to us designed to serve some other purpose than providing additional concealment.

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As Admiral Berkner notes by inference, the Soviet Union has, since the breakdown of the Summit Conference, embarked on a new effort to denigrate the United States. We view this as an attempt to undermine America's position as leader of the West rather than as a campaign to prepare the "national attitude" of the Soviet people for hostilities. We see a considerable element of caution in the propaganda fed to the Bloc internally, particularly as compared with the Korean war period. Furthermore, in conjunction with the growing aggressiveness of Soviet tactics since May, Khrushchev has been careful to reiterate with increased emphasis the inconceivability of major warfare. We cannot, of course, state categorically that all this is not part of a grand deception scheme to prevent the West from reaching the very conclusion which Admiral Berkner suggests. The possibility of deception is always a major intelligence worry. But the "national attitude" argument does not at this time seem to support the idea of active preparation.

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A recent review of the estimate of Soviet ICBM capabilities does not attribute to the USSR at this time a force which would justify in the Soviet mind the taking of any serious risks of nuclear war. In fact, we believe that the Soviet deployment of ICBM's is in a very early stage.

SIGNED

Allen W. Dulles
Director

Originator:
OCI/GenDiv/[] crl(19 Aug 60)

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MEMORANDUM FOR: DCI

Jack:

When Mr. Dulles last read the proposed letter to Dr. Kistiakowsky, he asked that the whole file be reassembled. Here it is.

He also said that he wasn't sure he agreed with the draft reply as it stood and wanted to see it again.

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